



# Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Timothy M. Morrison  
Southern District of Indiana**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, February 4, 2010  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ins/>

CONTACT: MARY BIPPUS  
(317) 229-2403  
mary.bippus@usdoj.gov

## **TWENTY-TWO CHARGED FEDERALLY IN EVANSVILLE DRUG TRAFFICKING CASE**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

Twenty-two persons have been charged in U.S. District Court in Evansville with conspiracy to distribute cocaine. Approximately 150 law enforcement officers from the region participated in the execution of arrest and search warrants related to the investigation on persons and residences in Evansville, Henderson, Kentucky and Miami, Florida. Recovered there was approximately 1/4 kilogram of powder cocaine and a quantity of crack cocaine, approximately \$21,000 in cash and 16 firearms. These charges are the result of an investigation led by the Evansville office of the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Evansville-Vanderburgh County Joint Drug Task Force.

The first indictment charges 12 individuals as follows:

- JEAN STERLING, 36, of Miami, Florida and Evansville,
- SLEDGE SEIDE, 33, of Evansville
- FRANCOEUR PIERRE, 30, of Evansville
- JULVIO GABRIEL, 28, of Evansville
- JULIUS WILBOURN, 36, of Evansville
- EDGAR GIBSON, 28, of Evansville
- MARVIN WHITNEY, 22, of Evansville
- BRUCE THOMAS, 48, of Evansville
- OLIVIA ALFANO, 22, of Evansville
- JOHNNY WILBOURN, 46, of Evansville
- LERNARD DIXON, 25, of Evansville
- JESSICA JEAN, 22, of Evansville

Sterling, Seide and Pierre are alleged to be members of the "Zoe Pound" Miami based criminal street gang. The indictment alleges that "Zoe Pound" is a criminal street gang founded by Haitian immigrants within the United States, with its roots in Miami, Florida. The defendants are alleged to have used and relied upon their ties to "Zoe Pound," which over the past two

decades has grown and branched out from its Miami roots and is well known for its involvement in drug trafficking, robbery and related violent crime, to facilitate and advance the conspiracy's drug trafficking activities in Evansville.

The first indictment charges all 12 defendants with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute both "crack" and powder cocaine. Defendants Wilbourn, Thomas and Pierre are additionally charged with separate instances of cocaine distribution in Evansville from July through September, 2009. Defendants Seide, Pierre, Gabriel, Whitney, Gibson, Johnny Wilbourn, Dixon, Alfano and Thomas are additionally charged with separate instances of using their cellular telephones to facilitate the drug trafficking offenses.

The second, related, indictment charges nine individuals, all of Evansville, as follows:

- MICHAEL DAVIS, 24,
- JULIUS WILBOURN,
- LERON SEALES, 26,
- JAMES WILSON, 70,
- ANDRE KING, 47,
- JAMES RAGLAND, 46,
- LAMAR DUERSON, 30,
- MELVIN COLLIER, 66,
- JELANI MCGEE, 28,

Defendants Davis, Wilbourn, Seales, Wilson and King are alleged to have participated in a related "crack" and powder cocaine distribution conspiracy. Defendants Davis, Ragland, Duerson, Collier and McGee are additionally charged with separate instances of using their cellular telephones to facilitate drug trafficking offenses.

In a separate federal complaint, related to the Davis indictment, two additional defendants, Kelly Shidler, 21, and Amber Powell, 30, were charged with the possession of cocaine with the intent to distribute it. The charges against Shidler and Powell stem from a February 1, 2010, traffic stop in Terre Haute, Indiana, during which Powell was found to be driving an automobile with a concealed trap compartment. According to the complaint affidavit, during a subsequent search of the automobile, law enforcement officers located approximately 2 kilograms of cocaine. The Complaint affidavit alleges that Shidler and Davis arranged for the receipt of the cocaine from sources in Chicago, Illinois, and followed Powell back from Chicago as she transported the cocaine on their behalf.

According to Assistant U. S. Attorney Matthew P. Brookman, who is prosecuting the case for the government, most of the defendants, if convicted, face maximum possible prison sentences of life imprisonment. Defendants Duerson and Collier face maximum possible eight year prison sentences. Defendants Ragland and McGee face a maximum possible prison sentence of four years.

Initial hearings began at 9:00 a.m. this morning for some of the defendants before U.S. District Court Chief Judge Richard L. Young in Evansville.

The following agencies assisted with the investigation and execution of the warrants:

FBI Evansville Safe Streets Task Force  
Evansville Police Department  
Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms & Explosives  
United States Marshals Service  
U. S. Postal Inspection Service  
Vanderburgh County Sheriff's Department  
Henderson, Kentucky Police Department  
Henderson County, Kentucky Sheriff's Department  
Kentucky State Police  
Indiana State Police  
Internal Revenue Service  
Gibson County, Indiana Sheriff's Department  
Vigo County, Indiana Drug Task Force

**The indictment is an allegation only, and all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at trial or by guilty plea.**

###

20100204.Sterling-et al.dt.wpd